

I have neither the moral authority nor the political audacity to propose in this lecture a way out of the dilemma pointed to by these two eminent statesmen. I remind you of it to emphasize the significance of conduct, of example, both personal and national, as a factor in international relations. Institutions, techniques, organizations and arrangements, however designed and however efficient, will not suffice unless individuals in positions of responsibility both inside and outside government make unremitting efforts to reach the goals which are set out in the Charter.

The League of Nations and the United Nations

In 1938 I was a member of the Canadian delegation at the eighteenth Assembly of the League of Nations and I have been a delegate many times to the General Assembly of the United Nations. Both bodies are the evolutionary product of previous systems of multilateral political negotiation, even though the usual technique for international relations has always been bilateral diplomacy. Indeed, in 1625 Grotius wrote:

"It would be advantageous, indeed in a degree necessary, to hold certain conferences of Christian powers, where those who have no interest at stake may settle the disputes of others, and where, in fact, steps may be taken to compel parties to accept peace on fair terms."

The Congress of Vienna, in 1815, and subsequent conferences, brought about changes in the technique of diplomacy and these have evolved into the present state of international organization.

Both the League and the United Nations have helped to make it easier for the modern state to conduct its international business. We do not think of the League as anything more than an organization of sovereign states, and indeed this has been the juridical basis for the United Nations. Yet both bodies have provided improved means for negotiation and a more efficient framework for diplomacy. Neither has been a substitute for ordinary processes of diplomacy. What they have done is to add a new dimension, basically the principles of the Covenant and the Charter, to the context of these processes.

Of course, the United Nations represents a higher rung on the ladder of international progress -- it has far more members, it has more powers, it embraces more activities than the League did. The authority of the Secretary-General has been increased. The rights of the individual are given prominence in the Charter as they were not in the Covenant. But the more one examines the two organizations the more their functions seem basically the same. We should neither be concerned nor surprised at this, for we should not expect radical innovations in the development of international organization. The real changes in the world since 1945 are not in organization but in the distribution and concentration of power, in the effects of technology and in the expectations of men everywhere for a better life. We have somewhat improved the international instruments for dealing with these problems. We have not made it certain that we can deal with them. In the words of the first Secretary-General of the United Nations: